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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [PTER](#) [EUN](#) [SR](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: DRL PDAS STEWART URGES PROGRESS ON IRAN, HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Classified By: USEU Deputy Chief of Mission Christopher Murray for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: During a meeting on November 19 with Karel Kovanda, Deputy Director-General for External Relations at the European Commission (EC), DRL PDAS Karen Stewart asked for EU support against no-action resolutions at UNGA and an early review of the Human Rights Council (HRC). Kovanda urged the United States to quickly close terrorist detention facilities at Guantanamo and to ratify the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court. We were also urged to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Kovanda suggested in a nuanced way that government actors in Belarus may not be as objectionable as we think. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On November 19, DRL PDAS Karen Stewart and USEU DCM met with Karel Kovanda, Deputy Director-General for External Relations at the European Commission and Rolf Timans, Head of Unit for Democratization and Human Rights. The meeting occurred a day prior to confidential multilateral talks in Brussels on Chinese human rights issues.

UN Issues

¶3. (C) PDAS Stewart asked for EU support again this year against no-action resolutions in the United Nations Third Committee. Specifically, she asked if EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana could call officials in Belgrade to urge Serbia to vote against the pending no-action resolution on Iran. Kovanda agreed to convey our request to Solana. Timans said that the EC and the Member States are pushing countries hard to resist no-action resolutions.

¶4. (C) Kovanda asked about the status of the Religious Intolerance resolution pending in New York. PDAS Stewart explained that we couldn't support the resolution in its current form due to U.S. constitutional issues, but that we have offered compromise language which we could either support, or at least not vote against. Kovanda said that he was glad to hear that we were willing to negotiate, and suggested that discussions be left to our delegations in New York.

¶5. (C) Turning to the Human Rights Council, PDAS Stewart inquired about whether or not the EU would support accelerating the review of the HRC, as mandated in its authorizing documents, from 2011 to something earlier like ¶2010. She also asked what the EU would think about moving the review to the UNGA versus having the HRC conduct a review

of itself. PDAS Stewart said that she couldn't say if the next administration would consider re-engaging in the HRC, but said that the HRC's current flaws need to be addressed, and that some in Washington were considering whether or not the scheduled review is an appropriate vehicle for enacting needed reforms. Timans said that the EU had no position on this idea and hadn't yet begun to think about the 2011 review. He strongly urged the United States to rejoin the HRC, saying that for all of its flaws, the EU felt having the opportunity to engage was worth the downsides.

The Next Administration

¶16. (C) Kovanda turned the conversation to the next administration and urged us to close terrorist detention facilities at Guantanamo as soon as possible. While he acknowledged the difficulties inherent in closing the facility, Kovanda called Guantanamo a "blight" on the U.S. human rights record and said that U.S. prestige will continue to suffer until we do away with the detention center there.

¶17. (C) Timans inquired about prospects for a policy review on U.S. participation in the International Criminal Court, and urged us to ratify the Rome Statute which authorizes the Court. He said that he hoped the new administration would reconsider U.S. policy on this issue, and noted that our refusal to ratify the statute was allowing China and Russia to hide behind us. Timans thanked us for not blocking the recent Sudan indictment in the UNSC. Timans also urged us to act to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

saying it was an easy, concrete step we could take to "improve your standing in the world."

¶18. (C) Kovanda ended the meeting by soliciting the opinion of PDAS Stewart on Belarus. She noted that the economy in Belarus is crashing, with foreign exchange reserves plummeting as the GOB seeks to avoid devaluing its currency. She said that activists are optimistic, and that she had recently seen a group of young opposition leaders from Belarus who were on a study tour of the U.S. Perhaps to say that the regime there is making more progress than we give them credit for, Kovanda responded simply by noting that 30 years ago it would have seemed impossible to imagine a group of young opposition activists from Belarus traveling abroad to the West for a study tour. Kovanda seemed optimistic about the future of Belarus and pleased to hear that we have been in discussions with the GOB.

¶19. (U) This message has been cleared with DRL PDAS Stewart.

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